

VZCZCXRO8647
PP RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHGI RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHKI #1877 3531048
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 191048Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5320
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS KINSHASA 001877

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#)
SUBJECT: NORTH KIVU UPDATE: CALLS FOR PEACE AND MILITARY
NEGOTIATIONS

REF: KINSHASA 1832

11. (U) Members of the North Kivu Hutu and Tutsi communities held a press conference in Goma December 16 to call for dialogue between renegade General Laurent Nkunda and the GDRC. The leaders of the community, including North Kivu Governor Eugene Serufuli, a Hutu, and National Assembly member Faustin Dunia, a Tutsi, said they aimed to cross ethnic and political lines to end the violence. They deplored the "enormous loss of life" and called upon the FARDC and Nkunda-allied forces to find a political solution to the current conflict (ref A).

12. (U) Dunia told us the military situation in North Kivu was generally calm as of December 19, and the community was optimistic that a peaceful solution could be reached, and that two incidents of violence December 18 had not affected the general mood of reconciliation. Short-lived heavy arms fire in the hills outside Jombe in Rutshuru, apparently from Nkunda-allied forces, ended without FARDC intervention, according to MONUC's Radio Okapi. Okapi also reported Nkunda-allied forces blocked a road in Masisi, 40 km from the provincial capital, Goma, restricting some commerce.

13. (SBU) MONUC also reported a December 18 meeting between FARDC 8th Military Region Commander General Ngizo and a Nkunda delegation at Kimoko, North Kivu. They agreed to allow the free movement of civilians to ease tension in the area and to pull back forces at a time and place to be negotiated. Per MONUC, General Ngizo gave the Nkunda delegates a large sum of Congolese francs for the payment of 81st and 83rd Brigade soldiers, which he called "a goodwill gesture."
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